

Milwaukee Selected as site of National Veterans Wheelchair Games

The following information was received from John W. Zewiske, VA Medical Center, Milwaukee, WI.

"The gathering place by the waters," as named by Native Americans, and today known as Milwaukee, will be the site of the 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games in 2007. Nearly 500 veterans will meet to compete in the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the nation June 18-24, 2007.

The games, presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Paralyzed Veterans of America, are open to all U.S. military veterans who use wheelchairs due to spinal cord injury, neurological conditions, amputations or other mobility impairments.

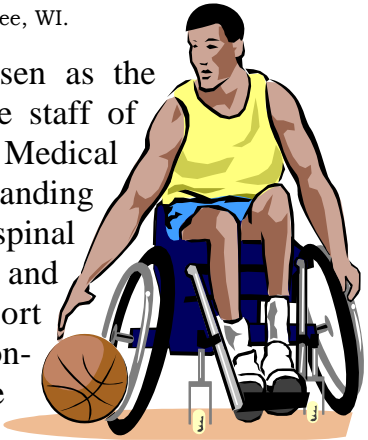
The Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Milwaukee and the Wisconsin Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America are hosting the games.

Events will take place at different venues in and around Milwaukee. The games will have an estimated economic impact of \$2.8 million to the area with participation of more than 2,000 people including athletes, coaches, sports officials, support staff and volunteers.

The staffs of the Zablocki VA Medical Center and the Wisconsin Chapter of the PVA have been working with VISIT Milwaukee (formerly the Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau) for several months to bring the games to Milwaukee.

This year the National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota and Anchorage, Alaska in 2006.

Milwaukee was chosen as the host city because the staff of the Zablocki VA Medical Center has a long standing tradition of care for spinal cord injured veterans and the strong support shown by the Wisconsin Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America. Milwaukee also demonstrated it has the venues and facilities needed to host an event of this magnitude.



Wheelchair sports promote the rehabilitation and wellness through rigorous sports competition. For many newly injured veterans, this event is their first exposure to wheelchair sports. The Wheelchair Games offer that veteran the opportunity to meet and learn from more experienced wheelchair athletes. Many say that the camaraderie of fellow veterans sharing their experiences is as valuable as the competition.

Veterans will vie in 16 competitive events including track and field, swimming, basketball, weightlifting, softball, air guns, quad rugby, nine ball, bowling, table tennis, archery, wheelchair slalom, power soccer, motorized rally and hand cycling. Several exhibition sports will also be offered.

The games were last hosted in Milwaukee in 1982.